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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR SECDEF GATES MEETING WITH TURKISH  
DEFMIN GONUL AT SEDM, OCTOBER 21

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: USD/P Edelman's October 13 visit here reinforced to the Turks the Administration's intensive efforts to defeat the Armenian genocide resolution (HR 106) and our wish that the bill not derail relations. Senior officials tell us they are deeply frustrated and will be forced to respond if the resolution passes. The Turkish parliament's October 17 authorization of a cross border operation against PKK terrorists in northern Iraq has caught the attention of Iraqi and Kurdish authorities. While GOT officials say a military operation is not imminent, another PKK attack could spark military action. You may wish to underscore with Gonul the Administration's continuing efforts against HR 106 and the need to avoid serious damage to our important security relationship and re-emphasize our view that a cross border operation will not serve stability in Iraq or the region. Gonul may dangle the prospect of improved chances for defense industrial cooperation if we can offer Turkey ITAR exceptions. Meanwhile, the Turks are seeking high-level assurances from us that a cargo of US-purchased BMP fighting vehicles being shipped to Iraq for eventual transfer to Iraqi Security Forces will not be diverted to the PKK. End summary.

#### Impact of Armenian Resolution

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¶2. (C) Prime Minister Erdogan made clear that if the resolution passes the full House, the GOT will have no choice politically but to respond. The comment made by one Member of Congress that Turks will get angry for a few days and then get over it has drawn ire here. Based in part on the French experience with Armenia legislation, we believe that if the resolution passes, the blowback will be measured over a period of years, not days. The GOT is watching the Hill very closely and trying to keep what options it has open.

¶3. (C) CHOD GEN Yasar Buyukanit warned publicly October 14 that bilateral security relations with the US will never be the same if the resolution passes. Days before the Committee vote, TGS abruptly canceled an 06-level meeting in Ankara to discuss the full range of bilateral mil-mil issues. Senior military officials canceled planned visits to EUCOM and the US. If the resolution passes, we expect a robust TGS reaction that could have an impact on our ability to support

operations in Iraq and Afghanistan until work-arounds are fully operational. You will want to highlight the Administration's on-going efforts to turn the tide on the Hill and stress our fervent wish to avoid long-term harm to US-Turkish relations if the bill passes.  
Potential for Cross-Border Operation Against PKK  
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¶4. (C) The overwhelming parliamentary majority which authorized the government to conduct military operations against the PKK in northern Iraq reflects Turkish frustration and feelings of impotence following the deaths of 16 soldiers at the hands of the PKK in early October. The motion is clearly intended to increase pressure on us, the Iraqi government and Kurdish authorities to take action against the PKK, while allowing the Erdogan government to show that it is responding to public outrage. Recent statements by Iraqi government and Kurdish authorities indicate that the CBO authorization has caught their attention. Upcoming high-level Iraq Neighbors meetings, including the November 2-3 Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul, offer Turkish and Iraqi officials more opportunities to work together on the PKK issue.

¶5. (C) With parliamentary approval in hand, another PKK attack will met by the GOT with a strike across the border. The GOT can launch limited incursions with no advance warning. You may wish to reiterate that such action would not eliminate the PKK threat and would be detrimental to Iraq and regional stability.

#### Interest in Defense Cooperation -----

¶6. (C) Our Turkish Foreign Military Sales program consists of over 300 open cases with a total value of approximately \$8.2 billion. Current major US defense programs include the acquisition of new aircraft and the upgrade of the world's largest F-16 fleet outside the US, and the pending transfer of five US Navy vessels. MOD interest remains high in potential programs which provide capabilities perceived as lacking. Our ability to compete in commercial sales of military equipment, however, continues to be hampered by onerous terms and conditions that our firms cannot meet. Our firms were unable to even bid on the tender for modern attack helicopters. In recent meetings, however, Turkish procurement officials have dangled the prospect of "a new level" of partnership with us in key areas of defense industrial cooperation if we are willing to negotiate an ITAR Treaty similar to what we have with the Australians, or at least give Turkey key ITAR exceptions. Gonul may press you on ITAR relief for Turkey.

#### High Level Interest in Iraq-Bound Military Cargo -----

¶7. (C) In the context of enduring Turkish concerns over the leakage into Turkey of US-procured weapons from Iraq, addressed by DOD GC Haynes and IG Kicklighter during their recent visits here, senior Turkish civilian and military officials have voiced worries to us about a cargo of refurbished BMP armored personnel carriers with AT-4 anti-tank missile mounts being shipped to Iraq for eventual transfer to Iraqi Security Forces. The Turks have told us they will interfere with the vessel, the MV Oniks currently waiting in Limassol, if they do not receive high-level assurances that we will provide adequate end-use monitoring. We are working to provide such assurances so that the ship may proceed to Iraq. You can assure Gonul that we are committed to putting in place safeguards that will prevent leakage to terrorists and criminal groups of weapons provided to Iraq.

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WILSON